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THE CHIEF RABBIS OF ENGLAND.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT THE

Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition,

ROYAL ALBERT HALL,

30TH JUNE, 1887.

BY

REV. DR. H. ADLER,

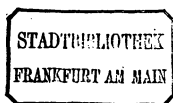
DELEGATE CHIEF RABBI.

(Reprinted from the "Anglo-Jewish Exhibition Papers.")

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THE CHIEF RABBIS OF ENGLAND.

BEFORE passing to the theme of my Lecture, I would offer my tribute of sincere gratitude to the gentleman to whose initiative the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition is due. Now and again disputations have arisen about the paternity of some successful project. But there is no dissentient voice that it was our excellent friend, Mr. Spielmann, who originated the wise plan of holding this Exhibition. In accordance with the Talmudic maxim,* קריינא דאנרתא איהו להוי פרוונקא, that he who reads a missive should at the same time carry it out, he, with admirable energy, executed the plan he had wisely conceived. The collection, so intelligently and tastefully arranged in the adjoining rooms, has, during the three months that it has been opened, afforded interest and instruction to many thousands. But it has served even a higher and worthier cause than this. It has contributed to stimulate a keener desire than has ever before existed to gain some definite information concerning our settlement in this country during the period prior to the Expulsion. The earnest wish has been aroused to possess a history of the Jews of England worthy of the name, based upon a thorough scholarly research into the sources—a research extending with equal care to references contained in our Rabbinical Literature, in Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ire-

* Sanhedrin, p. 82 b.

land, in Records, Deeds, and Shetaroth, and Synagoga Archives. The Lectures delivered in connection with this Exhibition by Dr. Charles Gross, Mr. Walter Rye, Mr. Joseph Jacobs, Mr. Lucien Wolf, and others, are an earnest of the golden grain that may be harvested by honest and patient toilers in this extensive field.

The paper that I have the honour to read to you this evening constitutes a humble contribution to this work. I propose speaking to you of the Chief Rabbis of England, those who acted in that capacity both prior to and after the Expulsion. Readers of the ancient Chronicles came across the mention of a "Presbyter" or "Episcopus Judæorum." Students of the Talmudic and Rabbinical literature occasionally met with the names of Rabbis who hailed from towns the names of which bear some resemblance to Londres and Eboracum.* But scholars who took a delight in poring over ancient Chronicles knew nothing of Hebrew, whilst to Hebraists the pages of mediæval historians and Latin documents were a *terra incognita*. It has been reserved to our time, to the great historian of the Jews, Professor Dr. Graetz, to command the two realms of knowledge, the Hebrew and the general, with equal mastery, and to combine them into one harmonious and organised whole. His example has been ably followed by a small band of painstaking and laborious students. In essaying to tread in the footsteps of those men, I am perforce obliged to claim your indulgence. Owing to the scantiness of the materials at my disposal, I have often been obliged to have recourse to speculation and hypothesis, instead

* *E.g.*, הר' וויש מאפרק תוס' ד"ה אם, R. Weiss of Eborac (Joma, p. 76).

of presenting solid facts to you as I fain would have done. I am aware that I have left many a lacuna that remains to be filled up ; I may inadvertently have fallen into some serious error. How has the work of an English Chief Rabbi, which now devolves upon me, increased since Josceus delivered annually to King Henry III. a pair of gilt spurs as rental for a house, or R. Uri Phœbus Hamburger indited a *brochure* on a divorce, in connection with which he was charged with an informality ! I was obliged to consult my authorities, and to jot down my notes, not during happy hours of leisure, but in scanty intervals, hastily, almost furtively, snatched from wearing duties and pressing responsibilities.

My subject naturally falls into two parts, coinciding with the two sharply defined sections into which the history of the Jews in England is divided. I shall first treat of the Rabbis who lived here prior to the Expulsion in 1290, and then, with the extremest brevity, of those who flourished in this country after our brethren had been readmitted during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

On my mentioning the theme of my Lecture to a friend he expressed his belief that I should be obliged to deal with it as the famous writer on Ireland, who headed one of his chapters "Snakes," and found that all he had to say on the subject was comprised in the words "There are no snakes in Ireland." Similarly my friend asserted that there were no Chief Rabbis in England during the Pre-expulsion period, or that, at all events, we knew nothing concerning them. I hope to prove to your satisfaction that my friend was mistaken. Happily, the supposition which has so long

been maintained, that the Jews during their early settlement were exclusively absorbed by the sordid occupations of money-lending and money-getting, is gradually losing ground. Dr. Goldschmidt, in his brief but carefully compiled treatise "*Geschichte der Juden in England von der ältesten Zeit bis zu ihrer Verbannung*," of which only the first part, dealing with the eleventh and twelfth centuries, has as yet appeared, observes justly (p. 11): "Commercial life, to which the Jews devoted themselves zealously, did not prompt them to set at nought the spiritual possessions of their religion. The fact cannot be gainsaid that the Jews of those days eagerly strove to acquire general culture as well as the knowledge of their religious precepts and of Hebrew literature." In illustration hereof he quotes the fact that Jewish teachers delivered public lectures, and thereby gave a currency to the tenets of Judaism, which in the eye of the clergy seemed to bode danger to Christianity. It was, therefore, deemed necessary to appoint preachers in cities where large congregations existed, whose function it should be to denounce Judaism. It is narrated in Peck's "*Antiquarian Annals of the Town of Stamford*"* that Joffred, Abbot of Croyland in the tenth year of Henry I. (1109) sent some monks from his abbey to Cottenham, so that they might publicly preach against Judaism in the neighbouring city of Cambridge. He also sent ecclesiastics to the convent of Wridthorst, near Stamford, in order to preach in Stamford against Judaism, and thus to "strengthen the Christian faith against Jewish depravity." It is likewise recorded that William II.

* Lib. IV., c. xv., p. 18.

summoned a convocation at London of Christian Bishops and Jewish Rabbis for the purpose of discussing the evidence of their respective creeds, and we are told by William of Malmesbury (*De Gestis*, p. 122) that the Jewish disputants must have stood their ground with vigour, for the Christian champions seemed rather apprehensive of the result of the contest. It is, also, a well-established fact that during this entire period they possessed synagogues and schools, so that they must also have had Rabbis competent to teach in them. Native Englishmen they were not, at least during the earlier portion of the Pre-Expulsion period. The spiritual leaders of the community came from France, which at that time was the seat of profound Talmudic learning. And when young men desired to engage in the higher Hebrew studies they had no alternative but to cross the British Channel, and to seek the Law at the mouth of some French Rabbi. In a *Responsum*,* R. Meir Rothenburg regards France and England as constituting one country. It would seem indeed as though even synagogue requisites were procured from France, for that most interesting relic in our Exhibition, the bronze bowl so kindly lent us by the curators of Bodley's Library, of which I shall have to speak anon, betrays its Gallic origin by the fleur-de-lis. The two most eminent Rabbis who are recorded as having been in England during this period undoubtedly came over from France. The first of them was R. Jacob of Orleans, a disciple of his famous namesake, the illustrious R. Jacob Tam of Rameru. He is frequently quoted in the Tos-

* No. 117.

safoth on the Gemara,* and as an interpreter of the Bible.† He met a martyr's death at the massacre which took place shortly after the coronation of Richard I. in 1189. Dr. Gross, in his biography of this Rabbi,‡ conjectures that he came to England on the occasion of the coronation as the delegate of the French Jews, who were under the suzerainty of England. But there are no facts to warrant this assumption.

The other eminent Rabbi was Rabbenu Jomtob ben Isaac of Joigny (a town not quite 100 miles south-east of Paris). He is frequently quoted in the Tossafoth.§ He took a prominent part in the tragedy enacted at York Castle, which Mr. Walter Rye described so graphically a few weeks ago. The uprising against the Jews of London which took place at the coronation of Richard the Lion-hearted had incited the provincials to direct their unfledged valour against the wealth of the Jews. At York the rabble rose against them with irrepressible fury, so that, as a last resource, the Jews sought refuge within the citadel. William of Newbury relates that for six days the besieged manfully repelled the attacks of their enemies. At length their slender stock of provisions was exhausted, they perceived that they could hold out no longer, and met in council to consider what they should do. Then R. Jomtob rose and addressed them thus: "Men of Israel! the God of our

* Gittin, p. 8 b, Jebamoth, p. 4 a, Ketuboth, p. 47 a, Sebachim, 14 b, p. 39 a.

† See the quotations in Zunz, "Zur Geschichte und Literatur," pp. 75, 76.

‡ "Magazin für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur." I., p. 87.

§ See the citations in Zunz, "Zur Geschichte und Literatur," p. 52, *et passim*.

fathers, to whom none can say, What doest thou? calls upon us to die for our Law. A glorious death is preferable to an ignominious life. Let us surrender the life our Creator has given us into His own hands, for this example has been set us by many of our pious and illustrious ancestors." There were but few who did not assent to this proposal. The heroic Rabbi set about carrying this resolution into effect, and sustained his flock by the courageous determination with which he faced his death on this memorable eve of **שבת הנדול** the Sabbath preceding the festival of Passover. The Rabbi is therefore named in the Tossafoth (Joma, p. 48 a) with the appellation of **הקדוש**, the martyr. And Isaac Disraeli* justly describes this tragic end as—

“A tale

Which Cato's self had not disdained to hear.”

The question now arises, Were these Rabbis the ecclesiastical heads of the communities amongst whom they dwelt? To my mind there can exist no reasonable doubt on the subject. They were, perhaps, not formally elected; in all probability they did not draw a regular salary from the congregations in which they officiated, but the fact that they were raised above their fellows by their learning and piety caused them to be venerated as spiritual chiefs. In proof hereof I may state that it is not known with absolute certainty whether Rashi was Rabbi of Troyes. We can only surmise that this ‘almost perfect ideal of a Rabbi,’ as he has been called, held the post of supreme Hebrew ecclesiastic in the town in which he dwelt.

We now proceed to deal with those who are mentioned

* “Curiosities of Literature,” (The Jews of York).

as having actually held the post of spiritual chiefs during the period prior to the Expulsion. The subject is rendered somewhat difficult by the peculiar nomenclature that is employed. We find the titles Episcopus, Presbyter, Sacerdos, and Pontifex used. Nor is the title Episcopus applied to one personage only at any given period, but we find the style attached to several contemporaries. The result of my investigation is this. The use of the mere name Episcopus does not denote a Chief Rabbi, but rather what we would call at the present day a Rabbi, one versed in Talmudic learning, and probably on that account holding some office in connection with the Synagogue.* It must, however, be admitted that the title Rabbi is also met with in the Documents. Thus in the Exhibition of Documents, etc., held at the Public Record Office (owing to the zealous and valued services of Mr. Charles Price Martin), the first record taken from the Pipe Roll 31 Henry I. (1131) contains an entry of sums of money paid to the king by Rubi (*i.e.* Rabbi) Gotsce. It is possible also that in some cases the Episcopus was the ר"מ , not so much the *Reader* as the *Supervisor* of all matters connected with the synagogal service, and I hope further on to adduce

* I entirely dissent from the supposition of Prynne ("Demurrer," pt. ii. p. 46) that Episcopus is a family name like "Bishop" at the present day. Family names were not in vogue then. I am aware that in several German cities, Cologne, Mayence, and Worms the title of "Juden-Bischof" was given to the Wardens of Synagogues. (See the authorities quoted in Hecht's "Miscellaneen aus der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland." Wertheimer's "Jahrbuch für Israeliten," 5617.) But there existed so little communication between the communities of England and Germany that we are not warranted in assuming that this arrangement was copied here.

an argument of some weight in support of this conjecture. Where the title *Presbyter omnium Judæorum Angliæ* occurs, it does not to my mind admit of doubt that we have to deal with an individual who actually exercised the functions of Chief Rabbi. I am aware that Prynne, in the second part of his "Demurrer to the Jews' long discontinued Remitter into England" (pp. 25, 26), labours to prove that the *Presbyter Judæorum* was a mere secular officer in the king's Exchequer of the Jews to keep the Rolls of Control. Tovey* adduces many powerful arguments to combat this theory, the most convincing being that in some records and chronicles the *Presbyter* is styled *Sacerdos* and *Pontifex*, thus proving that the office partook of a sacred character. I shall show you later on, that of one of those who held the office of *Presbyter* it is known with certainty that he was an eminent Talmudic authority. At the same time it must be admitted that the *Presbyter* had also to discharge secular functions. And in this connection I deem it right to quote the conclusions at which Dr. Charles Gross arrived in his masterly lecture on the Exchequer of the Jews. He stated that there was conclusive evidence to show that the *Presbyter* was an officer of the Jewish Exchequer, but that the sources did not yield sufficient data to enable us to clearly define his duties. "In the Letters Close elevating Elias Episcopus to the presbyterate, the Justices of the Jews were ordered to issue no summons concerning any debt which ought to be accounted for before them, except by the view and testimony of the said Elias, or his attorney (Prynne, ii. 54). It is quite probable that the *Presbyter* was the successor of the Jewish Justices or Wardens mentioned towards the close

* "Anglia Judaica," pp. 53-60.

of the twelfth century. He probably scrutinized and verified doubtful Hebrew contracts laid before the court of the Jewish Exchequer, and would be appealed to by the Justices for information concerning disputed points of Jewish usage. As he was one of the most prominent Israelites of England, his advice and influence must also have been very useful to the king when the latter wished to tax the Jews. If his authority had been any higher, any more mandatory, he would figure more prominently in the Plea Rolls of the Jewish Exchequer."

I will now proceed to enumerate the personages, who from their mention in the contemporary records may be presumed to have held the office of Chief Rabbi. The first name that occurs is in a document quoted by Madox in his "History and Antiquities of the Exchequer of the Kings of England," by the name "Deodatus Episcopus Judæorum," in connection with some debt.* Deodatus is probably the Anglicised equivalent of דאודאטוס or דאודאט. The document bears date the 24th year of Henry II. (1178). The title *Episcopus Judæorum* justifies us, I think, in the surmise that Deodatus held an ecclesiastical office of importance.

The next recorded name is that of R. Jacob of London, who was appointed in the first year of the reign of King John (1199). His appointment was confirmed by royal charter, and it may be of interest to you to hear the introductory words: "The king to all his faithful, both to all the Jews and the English, greeting: Be it known that we have granted and by our present charter confirmed to Jacob the Jew of London, Presbyter, supervision of all the Jews throughout all England, to be had and be held by him during his lifetime freely and quietly,

* P. 206, note w.

honourably and entirely, so that no one may presume to molest or trouble him in any way. We wish, therefore, and firmly command that the same Jacob, Presbyter of the Jews of all England, may live secure, shielded and peaceably defended.”*

King John also favoured him with a charter of safe conduct throughout his dominions, calling him *dilectus et familiaris noster* (our well-beloved and intimate friend).† Both these charters were granted by the hand of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chancellor of the Kingdom. It is passing strange that John, the unloving and unlovable tyrant, should have evinced so much consideration for the despised Jews. His endeavour evidently was to secure pliant officials to facilitate his cruel exactions. Can this R. Jacob be identified with anyone cited in Hebrew literature? In the אורח חיים on the דרכי משה § 473 it is stated וכן עשה ר"י מלונדרי תיקן כל הנדה בלשון לעז כרי שיבינו הקטנים והנשים of London; he translated the whole Hagada (the Pass-over Ritual) into the vernacular, so that the women and little ones might understand it.‡ It is possible, though of course it cannot be averred with certainty, that these two were identical.

His successor was Josceus, who is styled Presbiter Judæorum in a document of the Pipe Roll of 2 Henry III. (London and Middlesex), 1217,§ which states that Josceus, Priest of the Jews, renders account of one pair of gilt spurs for a house which belonged to Bonevius the Jew, in the parish of St. Michael Bassishaw. Josceus

* Prynn's "Demurrer," part ii., p. 3. † Ibid., p. 5.

‡ Cf. Zunz, "Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes," pp. 62, 63.

§ Dr. Charles Gross was good enough to furnish me with the text of this document.

is, of course, the Latinized equivalent of Joseph. Now is it not possible that this Josceus was the donor to the Synagogue of the bronze ewer which has been one of the treasures of our Exhibition? * For the name engraved on the bowl is יוסף, and he is described as the ecclesiastical head of the congregation. The object of this bowl cannot be stated with absolute accuracy. It may have been used as a laver for washing the dead, as Dr. Neubauer believes, or as a ewer to lave the hands of the Cohanim (and here I may mention that a later Chief Rabbi, R. David Teweles Schiff, presented a silver ewer and basin to the Great Synagogue for that purpose). Perhaps it may be inferred from the concluding words of the inscription that it was destined for the reception of alms. I do not agree with the translation given in the catalogue, and would render as follows the Hebrew inscription:—

הנדר יוסף בן הק' ר' יחיאל זצ"קל
 המשיב ושואל לקהל כהואל
 כדי לחזות פני אריאל
 ככת בדת יקותיאל
 וצדקה תציל ממות

"The gift of Joseph, the son of the martyred Rabbi Jechiel, (may the memory of the righteous and holy be a blessing,) who

* Since the above was written, learned articles by Mr. M. D. Davis and Mr. Joseph Jacobs, B.A., have appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, August and September, 1887, seeking to identify the donor of the ewer. The difficulty in their hypotheses is that no evidence is adduced to prove that the Joce Jechiel of Lincoln, or the Joseph ben Jechiel of the *Bedwell Shetar*, was a religious authority, as the inscription implies. The engraving of the fleur-de-lis on the bowl does not invalidate my theory, Louis VII. having adopted the Iris as his badge in 1147.

presides over the community as he desires, so that he may be worthy to see Ariel (Jerusalem) as it is written in the law of Jekuthiel (Moses).^{*} And righteousness delivereth from death."

His successor was Aaron of York (1237), who is described by the chroniclers and recorded in the documents as having been a man of great wealth. Mathew of Paris states that this Rabbi solemnly assured him that the King had exacted from him during a period of seven years the sum of 30,000 marks in silver; that he had paid the Queen 200 marks of gold, and he afterwards agreed with the King to pay him the annual sum of 100 marks. When we bear in mind that the value of a mark was 13s. 4d., and take into account the great difference in the value of money, we shall agree with Tovey (p. 108) that this amount is equivalent to what the richest nobleman would pay as a tax at the present day.

He was succeeded by Elias, one of the most learned and energetic of the Rabbis of those days. The name of his father is deducible both from Jewish sources and from the English records. Dr. Berliner, in his "*Hebräische Poesien des Meir ben Elias aus Norwich*," in the "Introduction" (p. 6), quotes a passage from the *מדרכי* which is as yet only in MS. (*פרק השוכר*) where the mention of the name of *ר' אליהו* is followed by a responsum of his father, prefaced by the words *וזה אביו* משה מלונדרש *הר'*, and signed *יום טוב*. It is impossible to state with any degree of certainty, that this Jomtob is identical with R. Jomtob of Joigny, the

^{*} The reference here is probably to the command, Deut. xvi. 16, "Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose."

martyr, as Mr. Jacobs conjectures. In the records his father is styled Magister Mosseus. In the passage already quoted, R. Elias of London cites a ritual decision *בשם ר"ב מקונטרסירא*, R. Benjamin, of Canterbury, who, in *תשובות מהר"ש*, No. 29, is stated to have been a disciple of Rabbenu Tam. This R. Elias is quoted several times in the *הנהגות מדרכי*. I do not think, however, that he is identical with *אליהו מנחם*, *מלונדריש*, who is also quoted in Rabbinical writings, as is assumed by Samuel Finn, the author of the "Biographical Dictionary," *בנסת ישראל*. R. Elias was appointed Presbyter of all the Jews of England, to succeed Aaron of York in 1243. He had been one of the six representatives of the London Community, who were chosen to constitute the Jewish Parliament at Worcester in 1241. His name occurs in several records. In the Exchequer Plea Rolls (Jews' Roll, No. 3, Mem. 1),* Elias Episcopus claimed 20s. from certain Jews by reason of his presbyterate. His Rabbinate fell in troublous times. King Henry III. was a veritable horse-leech, ever crying "Give, give." In the year 1254 the principal Hebrews were summoned before Earl Richard, the King's brother, and the Council, and were threatened with imprisonment and death unless they forthwith supplied the sum required of them. Thereupon (as Mathew of Paris relates)† Elias the pontifex (high priest), having taken counsel with his companions, stood up, and addressed the assembly in the name of his brethren:—"O noble lords, we see undoubtedly that our lord the King purposeth to destroy

* Kindly communicated to me by Dr. Charles Gross.

† "Chronica Majora" (Luard's edition in the Rolls Series, vol. v., p. 441). See also Prynne, "Demurrer," i., 28.

us from under the heaven. We entreat, for God's sake, that he give us license and safe conduct of departing out of his kingdom, that we may seek and find a mansion in some other place under some prince who bears some bowels of mercy and some stability of truth and faithfulness, and we will depart, never to return again, leaving here our household stuff and houses behind us. How can he love or spare us, miserable Jews, who destroys his own natural English? He hath people, yea, his own merchants, I say not usurers, who by usurious contracts keep up infinite heaps of money. Let the King rely upon them, and gape after their emoluments. Verily, they have supplanted and impoverished us, which the King, howsoever, dissembles to know; exacting from us those things we cannot give him, although he would pull out our eyes or cut our throats when he had first pulled off our skins."

The poor Rabbi was profoundly affected while making this address, his utterance being choked by sobs and tears, so that at its conclusion he fainted away. The King must have been greatly incensed, for we find that a few years afterwards Elias is deprived of his office, although no specific offence is charged against him. This Record is of great historical interest. It is to the effect that the King appoints Phillip Lovell and other Justices of the Jews to try Elias the bishop, a Jew of London, for a trespass committed by him against the King and his brother the King of Almaine (Richard, Earl of Cornwall). Elias being convicted thereof before the said Justices at the Exchequer, was adjudged to be deprived of the priesthood of the community of Jews in England, and of all other bailiwicks he had obtained from the King. Thereupon the King, for a fine of three

marks of gold paid to him by Cresse and Hagin, the brothers of Elias, on behalf of the community of the Jews, granted to the said community that Elias should never afterwards have the said priesthood; that for the future no man should be Chief Priest of the Jews without being chosen to that office by the general consent of the community; and that the said community should have full power, after the decease of any Chief Priest so chosen, to elect another at their pleasure, and to present him to the King for his approbation.

It would appear from this that the Jews could not elect their Chief Rabbis without a *congé d'élire*, and Mr. C. T. Martin* rightly infers from this circumstance that the supremacy claimed by the King in ecclesiastical matters was not confined to the Christian Church.

It is a strange circumstance that, although Elias had been deposed, his brother should have been appointed his successor, for we find that Hagin, the son of Magister Mosseus, is the next Presbyter mentioned. He is the one referred to in the preceding record as having paid three golden marks to the King. Were the Jews desirous of testifying their sympathy with the family of their former spiritual chief? Or did he owe his appointment to his wealth, for there is abundant proof that the family possessed houses and landed estates. The name Hagin, I need hardly tell you, is the equivalent of ה"ג, which at the present day appears in the Anglicised form "Hyam." This Hagin did not enjoy his honour for many years. After his death, Hagin, the son of Deulacres, was appointed at the instance and through the inter-

* In his preface (p. xci.) to the "Registrum Fratris Johannis Peckham Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis." (Rolls Series, vol. ii.)

cession of Queen Eleanor. This Hagin was in all probability the nephew of his namesake, the son of Cresse, the brother of Hagin, for Deulacres is spelt "Deulecresse," abbreviated into "Cresse." Deulecresse, or as it is written in its Latin form "Deus eum crescat," is obviously the translation of the Hebrew name גדליהו. The document in which the nomination is given is of considerable interest, for it shows that Eleanor, one of the most beloved and esteemed of the Queens Consort in English history, was kindly disposed towards the Jews. It also shows that, as said above, the royal confirmation was necessary at the appointment of a Chief Rabbi. The document is dated the ninth year of Edward I., May the 15th.* The following is a literal translation :

"The King to the Justices, Viscounts, Bailiffs, and to all his lieges, faithful subjects, also to his Jews in England, greeting. Know ye that, at the instance of our most beloved consort Eleanor, Queen of England, and with the consent of the community of the aforesaid Jews, we will and grant, for us and our heirs, that Hagin, the son of Deulacres, a Jew of London, shall have and hold, during his life, the office of priest of those Jews freely, quietly, and fully, with all appurtenances, liberties, and free customs belonging to this priestly function in such manner as the late Hagin, the son of Master Moses, the Jew of London, or any other before him, held that office.

"And if any one presume to molest him concerning

* Rymer's "Fœdera," London, 1816, vol. i., part. ii., p. 591, translated in part by Dr. Neubauer, in his article "Hebrew Translation of Mirror of the World," "Miscellany of Hebrew Literature," p. 168.

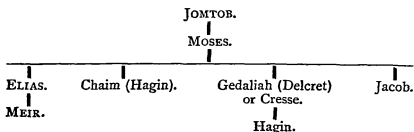
this, cause it to be redressed without delay (saving to us the fine for the offence against us) as [an offence] done to our own Jew * whom we specially retain in the afore-said office."

Dr. Neubauer has made a most ingenious conjecture concerning this Rabbi. M. Paulin Paris names Hagins, a Jew, as having translated into French the astrological works of Ibn Ezra. There exists also a Hebrew work, **צל העולם**, "Shadow of the World," which purports to be a translation of "L'Image du Monde," a French cosmographical work of the thirteenth century by R. Mattathiah, son of Solomon **דלקארט**. Now Dr. Neubauer proceeds to argue. A French work could have been translated into Hebrew only at a time when Jews were still resident in France, prior, therefore, to the expulsion of the Jews from that country. He accordingly surmises that the Hagin who is mentioned as the translator of the works of Ibn Ezra is also the translator of "L'Image du Monde," that he is none other than Hagin Deulacres, the last Chief Rabbi before the Expulsion, and that these literary productions gained him the reputation which caused him to be chosen to this high office. The combination is ingenious, but it cannot, I think, as yet be accepted as an historical fact. Of extreme value, however, are the Shetaroth which Dr. Neubauer has extracted from records preserved at Oxford, which prove this Hagin to have been possessed of extensive landed property. You will also recollect that most interesting statement made by Mr. Jacobs in his "Lecture on the London Jewry, 1290." By dint of patient research

* The original has "tanquam Dominico nostro Judæo." *Dominicus* (demesne) means specially belonging to the lord, as *dominica terra*, the demesne land of a manor.

he discovered that this Hagin lived at the corner of Wood Street, and he suggests that the lane opposite, still called Huggin Lane, derived its name from this Jewish notable.

But I have not yet done with this literary family. Dr. Berliner has been enabled by the munificence of our excellent President, Mr. F. D. Mocatta, to publish a MS. which he had discovered in the Vatican, containing poems by R. Meir ben R. Elias, of Norwich. Who is this R. Elias, the father of the poet? We have every reason to believe that he is none other than the R. Elias whose acquaintance we have already made as spiritual chief of the Jews of England. We have seen that in the records he is called Elia l'Evêque. Strange to say, in one of the small poems (No. 16) the author's father is called אליה החזן. Now I am quite aware that usually the epithet החזן signifies astronomer or astrologer. But is it not possible that here החזן is the translation of the title which his Christian contemporaries conferred upon the Rabbi, that it is the equivalent of the word חזן in its original signification, and that it should be rendered supervisor? We would accordingly establish the following genealogy:—



Who was this Meir? Abundant proof can be gathered from the poem published by Dr. Berliner—a

Piyut for the seventh day of Passover—that he was a good biblical scholar, and thoroughly versed in Mi-drashic lore. There is, therefore, to my mind every reason to identify this religious poet with the ר' מאיר מאינלימירא, who is quoted in the ה' שמחות of R. Meir Rothenburg (which treat of the ritual observances during the period of mourning), as communicating an interpretation of R. Samson of Sens, a fact which proves him to have been an erudite Talmudic scholar. Permit me to pursue this investigation a little further.

In the marvellously exhaustive list of Tosafists (authors of comments on the Talmud) contained in Zunz's "Zur Geschichte und Literatur," there are included (p. 42), נורניש Tossafot. Dr. Zunz refers to a work חכמה נובלות by Joseph del Medigo, who mentions that he is reproached for not publishing any ancient valuable work, such as the תוספות נורניש. Dr. Zunz also refers to a book נמרים מהררי, edited by Abraham ben Solomon Akra. It is a compilation of various treatises on the methodology of the Talmud, and contains ביאור קצת סוגיות מהנמרא מהרמב"ן ומהר"ם מנורניש on certain passages of the Gemara, by Nachmanides, and by R. Meir of Gornish. Another methodological work תוספות נורנין quotes an interpretation of the הלכות on the passage בבא קמא לא הרי השור, and as this interpretation is almost identical with that quoted in the שטה מקובצת, in the name of a disciple of Rabbenu Perez of Corbeil, Asulai conjectures in his שם הגדולים that the תוספות נארנין are identical with the תוספות תלמידי רבינו פרץ.

Now what place is this Gornish? I have applied to my friend M. Darmesteter, who has done such excellent

work in identifying French mediæval geographical names. He consulted M. Loeb. Neither of these scholars is able to point to any locality in France remotely answering to this place. *It seems, then, highly probable that this R. Meir of England is none other than this same R. Meir מאיר מנורניץ בארץ האי הנקראה אנגלטירא of Norwich, in the isle termed England, as he styles himself in the acrostic of his poem, and that, moreover גורניץ is a copyist's error for נורניץ.* Next to London the principal city inhabited by Jews was Norwich; this name occurs again and again in the Sheta-roth and the records of the chroniclers. We possess abundant proof that, despite oppression and exactions, the Jews in England devoted themselves with ardour to the study of the law. I therefore submit that Norwich in England may claim, like Touque (טוך), Evreux (אייברא), and Sens (שאנין) in France, to have produced a small band of scholars who pursued zealously their Talmudical studies, according to the method of their great masters. It may be further surmised that R. Jehuda of גורניש, quoted by Zunz as mentioned in the מרדכי on Baba Bathra, and R. David of דורניש, quoted by R. Elieser of Touques, also hail from Norwich.*

I have one other fact in support of my theory. We have all heard mention made of the חכמי נארוויש, "The wise men of Norwich." Who are they? These traditions hardly arise without some historical foundation. The Rev. Moses Margoliouth in his "History of the Jews of Great Britain" (1851, vol. i., p. 278), refers to this common belief. He says, "There is,

* As these sheets pass through the Press I learn that there is a Manuscript of the תוספות נורניש in the library of Baron Horace Gunzburg, in St. Petersburg.

however, a current opinion amongst the modern English Jews, that especially the sayings of the wise men of Norwich and of York are quoted in some of the additions made by the expounders of the Talmud." He proceeds to say that he addressed a letter on this subject to the Editor of the "Jewish Chronicle," hoping to elicit from his numerous well-educated readers information on the above. The Editor replied that "although the Rev. Mr. Margoliouth might have read through the Talmud again carefully (no easy task!), he must have overlooked the passage in Tosephoth (not having a Talmud at hand, we must defer the quotation of chapter and verse to our next number) where the wise men of Norwich are mentioned." Mr. Margoliouth concludes in a plaintive strain, "upwards of five years have passed away, and the promised 'quotation of chapter and verse' has not been given yet." I hope I have established by quotation of chapter and verse, that the wise men of Norwich are a myth no longer.

Before concluding this portion of my subject I would sum up in a few words the general character of the Rabbinate during the Pre-expulsion period. It is obvious that the holders of the office had to discharge duties which at a subsequent period devolved upon the secular heads of the congregation, the *ראש הקהל* or President. The monarchs who sat on the throne of England evidently viewed the office with favour, its incumbent being regarded as the readiest instrument for facilitating the royal exactions. Hence it is possible that in some cases the possession of wealth and influence was looked upon as a better qualification than learning or piety. But we have seen that the Rabbis were not in all cases the patient and willing tools of royal oppression. They

spoke before princes and were not ashamed, and held not their peace, even though their candour might lose them their office. We have seen in other instances that they were Talmudists of repute, and encouraged learning. One of the greatest scholars during this period was R. Moses ben R. Isaac Hannesia of England, author of a grammar and lexicon entitled ספר השם, "The Book of the Onyx." The manuscript of this work is in the Bodleian, and the first part was edited in 1883 by the Rev. G. W. Collins. A complete analysis of this work is given by Dr. Neubauer in his "Rabbins Français" already referred to (pp. 484-487), and he proves that this R. Moses is identical with the author known by the name of R. Moses of London, called הנקדן from his having written a treatise שער הנקוד והננינות on Vowels and Accents.* This ר' משה חזן is also called ר' משה הנקדן, which perhaps, again, is the equivalent of his Latin title Episcopus. I may here mention incidentally that the work is of considerable interest and value. R. Wolff Heidenheim, the grammarian, characterises him as an eminent authority on the Massora, and it is earnestly to be desired that Mr. Collins should be enabled to complete the publication. Dr. Neubauer states that a certain Moses ben Jomtob was the teacher of this author, and he is quoted as such in the ספר השם (p. 37). Now, this Moses ben Jomtob was none other than the Magister Mosseus, whom I have mentioned before, himself learned in the law, and father of the erudite Chief Rabbi Elias, who, we may readily imagine, gave every possible encouragement to the disciple of his father.

* See "Fragmente aus der Punctations und Accentlehre der hebr. Sprache," angeblich von R. Moses Punctator, Hanover, 1847, ed. Dr. Frensdorff.

We also know the very hospitable reception which Ibn Ezra received in London in the year 1158, when he composed the **אגרת השבת** and **יסוד מורא**. He writes in words of praise of a certain Solomon, whom he describes as a man of truth, upright and God-fearing. Another of his pupils, Joseph of Modvil, copied portions of the Commentaries, adding such notes as he had heard at the mouth of his master.*

Dr. Neubauer has also brought under my notice another Rabbi who flourished at this period in London. His name is **יעקב בן יהודה חזן מלונדריין** Jacob, the son of Judah *Episcopus* (?) of London, the author of a work on Jewish Law and Ritual, the MS. of which is in the Rath-Bibliothek of Leipsic (No. 17).† The period of its composition may be gathered from the data given in the author's Treatise on the Jewish Calendar, and his formula of the Letter of Divorce, **שנת מ"ז לפרט**, **אלף הששי**—1287. It is of interest to note that in this formula London is described as situated on the River Thames **וגלברוק** (and Walbrook).

These various facts prove, I think satisfactorily, that there prevailed an ardent and earnest devotion to Hebrew literature generally, and to the Bible in particular. We have the right to assume that the Chief Rabbis, by their example and teaching, contributed to rouse this love and preserve this knowledge, a love and knowledge which upheld and sustained the Jewish community of England during the dark days of degradation, banishment, and exile.

* See Graetz, "Geschichte," vol. vi., p. 209, and "Introduction to the Commentary of Ibn Ezra on Isaiah," by Dr. Friedländer, p. xxv.

† See Ben Jacob's **אוצר הספרים** s. v. **עין חיים**.

My lecture has already exceeded the limits usually assigned to such productions. I must therefore treat of the rest of my theme with extremest brevity. Tempting though the field appears, I have to eschew all mention of the Chachamim of the Sephardim. An entire monograph, and not the mere fag-end of a paper, should be given to this theme. And in respect to the Chief Rabbis of the Askenazim, time permits me to give only a few dates, heads, and references, limiting myself to such observations as I have gleaned from works not accessible to the general reader, and omitting whatever would be found in the work of Mr. James Picciotto, the painstaking author of "Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History."

Since the re-admission of the Jews into this country there have been altogether only six Chief Rabbis, including the present incumbent of the office ה' יאריך ימיו. Now, in the list of the הזכרת נשמות, the Memorial of the Dead, recited in the Great, and the majority of other Synagogues, there occur more than five names, and it is evident that mention is made in that list not exclusively of London Chief Rabbis. The first name in the catalogue is that of מו"ה אהרן בן מו"ה משה. I have been at great pains to identify this Rabbi, but have not succeeded. I have not been able to trace a Rabbi bearing this name as having discharged ecclesiastical functions in England. I therefore suggest that, as was the case with the personage who stands second in the list, he never was in this country, and that for some reason or other his name was introduced by one of the subsequent Chief Rabbis. This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that his title is not מורי מורנו רב, the epithet applied to a Chief

Rabbi who has actually held the office here, but מורנו רב the epithet given to a Chief Rabbi who discharged the function in another country. Is he to be identified with R. Aaron ben Moses, the predecessor of R. Hirsch Löbel, generally called R. Hirsch Berlin, in the Rabbinate of Berlin, who was appointed in 1763, preached a Hebrew sermon on the occasion of the Peace of Hubertsburg, which was translated into German by Moses Mendelssohn, and who edited the ספר הארוך of the *ק"יורה דעה ש"ך on the

There is no doubt as to the identity of the second name מו"ה אריה בן מו"ה שאול †. He was a Rabbi of great eminence 1690-1755; he was spiritual chief in succession of the congregations of Resha (in Poland), Glogau, and Amsterdam, and married the daughter of Rabbi Zewi Ashkenasi, called Chacham Zewi. His name was no doubt introduced into the Memorial of the Dead as an act of filial piety by his son R. Hirsch Löbel of London.

We have now come to the first of the Post-expulsion Chief Rabbis, מורי מורנו רב ר' אורי בן הח"ר נפתלי, or, as he is also called, R. Pheibush (Pheibush, the corruption of Phoebus, being the equivalent of Uri, which signifies light) ben R. Hirz Hamburger. We can understand how his name would be Anglicised sometimes into R. Philip and sometimes into R. Aaron Hart. I believe that Mr. James Picciotto is mistaken in not identifying R. Uri Pheibush with the aged R. Aaron Hart, with whom Mr. Goldney, the zealous conversionist, held several disputations. ‡ He came from Breslau, and was in all

* See תולדות אנשי השם ופעולותם בעדת בערלין By Landeshut, part i. p. 60.

† Ibid., pp. 71, 72, and Carmoly's יונה, p. 35.

‡ Picciotto, "Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History," p. 143.

probability appointed Rabbi of the first Ashkenazi Synagogue opened in Broad Court, Mitre Square, in 1692, by the influence of his wealthy brother, called Moses *Breslauer* by his co-religionists, and Moses *Hart* by his Christian countrymen, through whose endeavours a more commodious place of worship was erected on the site of the smaller synagogue. R. Uri Phœbus was born at Breslau in 1670. After studying at a Jeshiba in Poland he married the daughter of R. Samuel ben Phœbus of Fürth, author of the *בית שמואל*, the well-known Commentary on the *אבן העזר*.

During his Rabbinate an incident occurred with regard to a divorce, which created a considerable amount of communal excitement and heartburning. A member of the synagogue, Asher Ensel Cohen, was desirous of having his marriage dissolved prior to his departure for the West Indies. The Chief Rabbi accordingly supervised the writing of the bill of divorce and its delivery from the husband to his wife *more Judaico*. A certain Mordecai Hamburger protested against the legality of the "Get" on various grounds, among others, that sufficient publicity had not been given to the act, and that no scholars versed in ecclesiastical lore had been present as assessors. The Rabbi warned him not to criticise the validity of the document, such disparagement being prohibited by Rabbenu Tam under the penalty of excommunication. The Rabbi of the Hambro' Synagogue, Jochanan Helli-shau, took the part of Mordecai Hamburger, and obtained decisions from several contemporary eminent Rabbis defending the action of his client. Rabbi Uri Phœbus published, in 1707, a small work entitled *אורים ותמים*, which is of interest as being, I believe,

the first Hebrew book printed in London; and R. Jochanan Hellishau published his "Adversaria," with the decisions of the Rabbis, under the title of *מעשה רב*. Both treatises are of value as throwing some light upon the condition of the Jews in those days. It would seem that a congregation was already then in existence in Dublin, for *רבי אהרן סופר מדובלין* is spoken of.* R. Jochanan describes his English co-religionists as very charitable and hospitable, but stigmatizes them as being somewhat lax in their observance of some dietary precepts when they go to the "country, the place of gardens and parks."† The most important event during this Rabbinate was the erection of a synagogue in Duke's Place, at the sole expense of the Rabbi's brother, Moses Hart, which was consecrated on the eve of *ר"ה תפ"ב*, the festival of New Year, 1721. R. Uri Phoebus died in 1756.

The Rabbinate was not long left vacant, for in 1757 R. Hirsch Löbel was appointed Chief Rabbi, or to give him his full title *מורי מורנו רב ר' צבי בן מורנו רב ר'* אריה. Strange to say, in the Memorial list, he follows instead of preceding R. David Tewele Schiff. He was the second son of the above-named R. Arjeh Löb, being born to him while he was Chief Rabbi of Resha, in 1721. Early in life he gained renown as a profound theologian. When he was barely thirty years old, he threw himself with great activity into the unhappy polemics which were then raging against the famous R. Jonathan Eybeschütz, who was accused of being an adherent of the Pseudo-Messiah Sabbathai Zewi. He naturally sided with his uncle R. Jacob Emden,

* Urim Ve-Thumim, p. 1.

† Maasé Rab., p. 16^b.

who was an unrelenting opponent of Eybeschütz. The missives* he composed on this subject, which was then engrossing the minds of the entire Jewish community, achieved so much *κῶδος* for him that shortly after the death of R. Uri, he was elected Chief Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, in the year 1757. Not long after his arrival here he must have suffered considerable annoyance from matters relating to Shechita. A certain Jacob Kimchi, author of *שושנת יעקב* containing Talmudic comments, published a Responsum † (Altona, 1760), in which he declared all the Shochetim of London as unworthy of holding their posts on account of their not rejecting certain animals which were alleged to be suffering from a disease of the lungs, and thus causing the congregation to eat forbidden food. The Chief Rabbi maintained that the Shochetim had not acted illegally, but he was not permitted by the Wardens to publicly state the reasons which actuated his decision. Indeed, it would seem that the lay leaders of the congregation in those days pursued a policy very different from that adopted by their successors now. They sought to hamper the activity of their ecclesiastics as much as possible, and would permit no step to be taken by them without their cognizance and express sanction. This interference appears to have induced R. Hirsch Löbel, Rabbi Hart Lyon as he was called here, to resign his post, although he was in receipt of the then liberal salary of £250, after having held it for only seven years. Perhaps also, as Landeshut ‡ suggests,

* Reproduced in the above-named work of Landeshut, pp. 72-78.

† *שאלה ותשובה*. The pamphlet is of interest from its side-lights; thus it shows that at that time there were Hebrew congregations in Gibraltar, Jamaica, and Barbadoes. ‡ Ibid., p. 78.

he was induced to leave England through chagrin at witnessing the prevailing neglect of Biblical and Talmudic studies. In fact the Wardens of Halberstadt state in a letter addressed to him, and dated Sivan, 1763, that they had heard from trustworthy travellers, that, inasmuch as the religious studies of the young did not flourish in England, he was longing for a pious German community where there would be greater scope for the teaching of the law. A well-known bon-mot is related of him. He was asked why he had left London? "Because this is the first שאלה ('question,' generally applied to a religious inquiry) that has been put to me," was his witty reply. He was successively Rabbi in Halberstadt, Mannheim, and Berlin. I may be permitted to quote another witticism of his, relative to the characteristics of these three towns. He said, "In London I had money but no Jews; in Mannheim Jews but no money; in Berlin neither money nor Jews." It would, of course, be beyond the scope of the present paper to dilate upon his activity in Berlin. I would only mention that in addition to his Talmudic knowledge, he possessed considerable attainments in Hebrew grammar, Jewish history, philosophy, physics, and geometry. He was a friend of Mendelssohn, and unlike some of the Rabbins of those days, approved of his German translation of the Pentateuch. There is in the library of our Beth Hamedrash, a manuscript containing the commentaries of Ralbag (Gersonides) on Averroes which was presented to him by Moses Mendelssohn on Purim, 1773.*

* See Dr. Neubauer's "Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the London Beth Hamedrash," No. 43. There are three volumes of manuscript responsa by him in that same library, Nos. 24-26.

I cannot, however, yet part from him, because in our Memorial List his son is mentioned, **ובנו מורנו רב רבי שאול**, although he never filled any office here. This record of R. Saul Berlin is probably due to the circumstance of his having died in London. He was a very remarkable man, and led a somewhat wayward life. A learned Talmudist in those days, R. Raphael Cohen, had written a work, **תורת יקותיאל על ש"ע יו"ד**, which was regarded of such high merit that he was appointed Chief Rabbi of the three united congregations of Altona, Hamburg, and Wandsbeck. After the work had been in circulation seventeen years, an anonymous treatise appeared under the title **מצפה יקותיאל**, attacking this work with the greatest acrimony, charging the author with plagiarism and the grossest errors. This unsparing criticism excited great indignation. Rabbi Hirsch Löbel, then Chief Rabbi of Berlin, was about to fulminate a Cherem against it, when his colleague, R. Meyer bar Simcha Weil, whispered to him the Bible verse, wittily applying it to the matter in hand: **אהה אדוני והוא שאול** (2 Kings, vi. 5), "Alas, master, it is Saul." When he heard that his own son was the author of the incriminated work he had not the heart to take further proceedings. R. Saul defended himself against the attacks made upon him by pleading that he had not been actuated by any personal motives, but that he had solely written in the interests of truth. He afterwards (1793) published a collection of Responsa, alleged to have been composed by an ancient teacher, the **ראש** (R. Asher ben Jechiel), under the title of **בשמים** **ראש**, with a commentary of his own, **בסא דהרסנא**. But it was asserted that they were written not by the authority

to whom they were attributed, but by Saul himself.* The affair caused so great an excitement that he was forced to leave Berlin. He came here, wearied and heart-broken, died shortly afterwards, and was buried with every mark of honour.† In vindication of his character, I should mention that the late Mr. Meir Josephs, who was not over-indulgent in his criticisms, especially of ecclesiastics, had the highest opinion of this ill-fated Rabbi. In an obituary written by him for the "Literatur-Blatt des Orients," 1844, p. 714, he describes Saul as a man of rare abilities. "I was his only friend. I visited him daily; we remained together for hours. Although I am now eighty-three years of age, the impression made upon me by his career and his oratorical talents is vivid, and will never be effaced." He communicates R. Saul's last will and testament, which breathes a spirit of fervent piety, and dedicates a touching elegy to his memory.

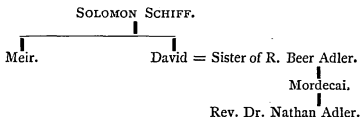
The successor of R. Hirsch, the "Berliner Rav," as he was called, was מורי מורנו רב רבי דוד בן משה ר' שלמה הכהן or as he is also known, R. David Tewele Schiff. He was born in Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and was the son of the learned R. Solomon Schiff.‡ He was educated in the schools of the Rabbis Jacob Poper and Jacob Joshua Falk, taught for some time at the Jeshiba of R. Löb Sinzheim in Worms, returned to his native city, and, in conjunction with his friend R. Nathan Maas,

* The subject is exhaustively treated in the Appendix to Dr. Zunz's "Ritus der Juden." See also "Jost Geschichte des Judenthums," iii., p. 396.

† See also the references in Landeshut, *ibid.* p. 105.

‡ Most of the statements relating to this Rabbi are taken from "Frankfurter Rabbiner," by Dr. M. Horowitz, part iii., pp. 18-22.

became Rabbinical assessor of the Chief Rabbi Abraham Lissa. The fame of his Talmudical learning reached London, where he was appointed Chief Rabbi in 1765. He married the sister of Rabbi Beer Adler, so that, as the following genealogical table will show, he was the grand-uncle of the present Chief Rabbi.



One of his first duties was the consecration, in 1767, of the Synagogue in Duke's Place, which had been rebuilt and enlarged. The ceremony was of a very imposing character. Mr. Picciotto quotes a newspaper of the day which speaks in glowing terms of the celebration. It describes Handel's Coronation Anthem as having been performed by a numerous band of eminent musicians, and the processions and other ceremonies in the Synagogue as having been accompanied with several anthems and choruses by the same performers.

In a collection of Responsa entitled *לשון זהב*, which we may render "Chrysostomus," a fitting description of the eloquent pastor, edited by his grand-nephews, Rabbis Beer and Gabriel Adler, there appears a letter written by his former colleague, Nathan Maas. The Frankfort Dayan tells the London Chief Rabbi, "crowned with the triple diadem of the Law, the Priesthood, and high position," how pleased he was to learn that he had won so much praise by the discourse

he preached at the consecration. The decisions on religious questions contained in the work I have named throw some light on the condition of the Jews in those days. Thus he consults his nephew, my grandfather, R. Mordecai Adler, Rabbi of Hanover, how the precept of ערלה (Lev. xix. 23-25) is to be kept by wealthy men who own gardens and parks. He must have been a preacher of great power. Several of his sermons have been preserved, especially one which he preached at the Thanksgiving Service on the occasion of the recovery of George III., when he took as his text Psalm xxi. 2: "The king shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice." Letters are extant addressed to him by Lord George Gordon, entreating to be received into the Synagogue; but the Rabbi, wisely, no doubt, refused acceding to this request. In 1790, the old Synagogue in Duke's Place was demolished, and the present structure erected, Mrs. Judith Levy, the daughter of Moses Hart, contributing the sum of £4,000. He died in 1792, after having officiated for twenty-seven years, his funeral being conducted with marked honours.*

The Rabbinate remained unfilled for several years, the members of the Great Synagogue availing themselves of the services of the Rabbi of the New Synagogue, who is described in the memorial list as מורנו ר' משה בן מורנו רב ר' מאיר, and who was known as the Rev. Moses Myers. I have been enabled to glean

* His life and works are fully treated of by Dr. Horowitz in his "Frankfurter Rabbiner," iii., pp. 18-22, who has also conclusively shown how greatly the famed Talmudist R. Nathan Adler was indebted to his master, R. D. Teweles Schiff. Ibid., pp. 38-41.

but very few facts concerning him.* He was a native of Holland, and was elected by the members of the New Synagogue shortly after that place of worship had been opened at Bricklayers' Hall in Leadenhall Street. He died at the age of fifty-five in 1814, and it is said that his death was accelerated by excitement on the occasion of his appearance as a witness before a court of justice in a case of Mekaddesh. It is strange that, while in his epitaph his name appears as הרב החבר ר' משה, it is commemorated in the הזכרת נשמות with the full Rabbinic title of מורי מורנו רב.

The last name on the list is that of מורי מורנו רב ר' צבי שלמה בן מורי מורנו רב ר' צ"ל. As so full an account of him is given by Mr. Picciotto and in the obituaries which appeared on the occasion of his death, I deem it needless to detain you. I will only mention that he was born in London in 1762 during the Rabbinate of his father, that he occupied the Rabbinical chair in Prenzlau, that after the death of R. Tewelee Schiff in 1802 he was called to the London Chief Rabbinate, that he was of great service in furthering the cause of charity, and laboured with considerable zeal in the cause of education, and died in 1842, at the age of 81. Some are yet alive who remember his commanding presence, and can record illustrations of his ready wit, and of the great influence he wielded. Some of his discourses were published, a sermon preached on the death of Lord Nelson being especially eulogized in the *Gentleman's Magazine* as "breathing a strain of true piety, great loyalty and universal benevolence."

* Those here given were kindly furnished me by Mr. I. M. Myers.

Of the present holder of the office it is not becoming in me to speak.

In conclusion I would observe that in the course of my researches I was painfully struck by the scanty nature of our Synagogal archives and the ignominious neglect with which they have in many instances been treated. I earnestly hope that in the future these muni-ments will be treated with greater care and reverence. I am at issue with old William Prynne on many of the statements he makes in his "Demurrer." But he is in the right when he insists on the excellence, utility, and necessity of preserving the ancient records as the richest pearls, treasures, and jewels of a nation.* May my plea not pass unheeded!

* Prynne, "Demurrer," ii., p. 136.